

Appln No. 10/040,934
Amdt date May 10, 2004
Reply to Offic action of January 9, 2004

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please replace the paragraph at page 2, lines 21-30 with the following:

The scanning machines that the USPS utilizes have exacting standards for printing printed postal indicia. The postal indicia must be placed in the proper location on media in order for it to be read by the scanner. The various media types and sizes available to the user make this task difficult. This is a result of the different physical dimensions of the various media. The placement of the postal indicia is different with each different type and size of media. Therefore, it would be advantageous to provide a method and system for printing postal indicia on custom sized envelopes.

Please replace the paragraph at page 5, line 33 to page 6, line 30 with the following:

Referring to FIG. 1, the present invention utilizes a combination of processes to print postal indicia onto custom sized envelopes in accordance with the regulations set forth by the USPS. In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the process of printing postal indicia on a custom sized envelope begins with creating a new custom envelope size that will be available for use in the on-line system. This is accomplished by following the on-line procedure that establishes the custom sized envelopes in the custom envelope manager. The

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first step is to select the print internet postage tab 2 from the main window. Next, the user decides to add a custom sized envelope 3 for future use. Details of the custom sized envelope are then entered. These details include the name of the custom sized envelope 4 and the height and width of the custom sized envelope in inches 5. After the details have been entered, the user selects the printer 6 and inserts the custom sized envelope into the printer 7 and prints a sample envelope. Next, the sample envelope is examined to verify 8 that the four pieces of indicium (FIM, human readable portion, indicium 2-D barcode and postnet barcode) meet the specifications defined by the USPS 9. If the sample indicium do not satisfy the USPS specifications, the custom sized envelope cannot be saved 10. If they do meet the specifications, the sample envelope is examined to verify 11 that the FIM is printed in the correct location on the custom sized envelope 12. If the FIM is printed in the wrong location, the custom sized envelope cannot be saved 13. If the FIM is printed in the correct location, the custom sized envelope is saved 14 for future use. The user can immediately begin using the custom sized envelope to print postal indicia without having to log off from the client software and re-start it. The user's computer does not have to be re-booted and a confirmation email from Stamps.com customer support is also not needed.

Please replace the paragraphs at page 7, line 12 to page 8, line 26 with the following:

An The exemplary print internet postage screen 19 preferably provides a mail piece drop down box 24 that allows

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users to select the type of mail piece to be sent, such as for example, a letter, flat, box or oversized box. The postage system preferably uses this information to determine what labels and/or envelopes are available to the user, and to establish the proper postage rate.

An The exemplary print internet postage screen 19 further includes a print on down drop box 25 which allows users to select from envelopes, including custom sized envelopes, and labels. The items displayed in the drop down box 25 are preferably determined by the type of mail piece that was selected via the mail piece drop down box 24. For example, if a letter is selected, only envelopes and labels approved by the USPS may be available in the print on drop down box 25. Similarly, if a flat or box is selected, only labels approved by the USPS for the selected flat or box may be available. An exemplary embodiment of the present invention does not incorporate a default print onto media.

An The exemplary print internet postage screen 19 allows users to enter the weight of an item to be mailed into weight fields 26A, 26B. The dimensions of the weight fields may be for example pounds and ounces. A default weight is preferably 0 lbs., 1 oz. After the initial use, the fields preferably remember the last value.

A mail class box 27, preferably displays a plurality of available classes as well as the cost of each type of service for the selected mail piece type. The prices preferably update as the user inputs information into the weight fields 26A, 26B. If the user is typing a value, the display may immediately

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update as the user types. The price may also update as a function of the delivery address of a mail piece. Once a user has selected a mail class, an indication, such as for example, a solid circle 36 may appear adjacent to the selected class. An exemplary on line postage screen 19 preferably does not select a default class type.

An available postage window 35 (reflecting the user's account balance) is preferably displayed on the print internet postage screen 19 as is a print preview window 34. The print preview window 34 is preferably updated in accordance with the media type selected in the print on drop down box 25. The selection of a print sample button 30 allows the user to print a sample postage indicia at no charge. The sample postage indicia will print with the word "VOID" across the bar-coded area and is not valid for mailing. The user may print as much sample postage indicia as is desired, on either envelope or label, all at no charge. The selection of a print postage button 31 allows the user to print postal indicia on a custom sized envelope.

Please replace the paragraphs at page 11, line 17 to page 12, line 25 with the following:

An exemplary custom envelope setup screen for verifying the correctness of a custom envelope size 81 prompts the user to compare the QA envelope with the envelope 82 displayed on the screen. Verification is a two step process that ensures that the newly created custom sized envelope meets the specifications created by the USPS and Stamps.com. FIG. 9 illustrates the first step in the verification process which ensures that the QA

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envelope accurately shows the four pieces of indicium. The four pieces of indicium are (1) a FIM barcode 83, (2) a human readable portion 84, (3) an indicium two dimensional barcode portion 85, Stamps.com name and the registered meter number and (4) a postnet barcode portion 89. The human readable portion 84 includes the dollar amount, mailing date, mail class, and the city and zip code of the registered meter. The indicium two dimensional barcode portion 85 is intended to help thwart fraud, and may include information about the mail piece, such as for example, the destination ZIP code, the amount of postage applied, the date and time the postage was applied, and a digital signature so that the USPS can validate the authenticity of the postage. The postnet barcode portion 89 is for the delivery address. The user preferably verifies that each of the postal indicia features printed on the QA envelope match those displayed on the exemplary custom envelope setup screen for verifying the correctness of a custom envelope size 81. In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, neither a "yes" radio button 86 or nor a "no" radio button 87 is selected by default. A "Next>" button 88 is preferably not available until the user selects either the yes or no radio button.

The user confirms the first verification step by selection of the "yes" radio button 86. The "Next>" button 88 is then available. Upon selection of the "Next>" button 88, the user is advanced to an exemplary custom envelope setup screen for verifying the placement of postage on the custom sized envelope 93 for the second step of the verification process. This screen is illustrated in FIG. 10. The second step involves ensuring

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the FIM 94 was accurately printed on an expanded view of the QA envelope 95. The FIM must either be touching the top edge of the envelope or not more than 1/8" below the top edge of the (QA) envelope. In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, neither a "yes" radio button 96 ~~or nor~~ a "no" radio button 97 is selected by default. A "Next>" button 98 is preferably not available until the user selects either the "yes" radio button or the "no" radio button.

Please replace the paragraph at page 15, lines 6-13 with the following:

When a user first tries to ~~setup set up~~ a printer with the client software, a Server-Based printer database is queried to determine if the user's printer driver information is contained within the database. If the printer information is in the database the required information is available and the user may continue. If the printer driver is not in the database, the user performs several tests to determine the required information with the guidance of a software wizard.